



Spoken Statement By IT for Change During the Proceedings of Formal Consultations Regarding Review of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) at IGF's Sharm El Sheikh Meeting

Respected Chairperson and IGF participants

I speak on behalf of IT for Change, an NGO from India. We are of the view that the IGF is an innovative experiment in global governance. We would like the IGF to continue beyond its initial 5 year term. However, we believe more efforts are required to ensure that the IGF fulfills all parts of its WSIS mandate.

The inclusion of non-governmental actors on par with governmental actors is a key principle of the IGF, and we feel that under no circumstances should this be diluted.

We are also of the opinion that the present support-structure and institutional location of the IGF should not be disturbed. At present, the IGF structure is able to maintain a fine balance not only among stakeholders, but also among different institutions in the complex IG ecology. The UN-DESA has given fine support to the IGF, and helped maintain its independence and neutrality. Moving the location of the IGF into any one of the institutions directly concerned with IG will disturb this delicate balance, and may harm global public interest.

We firmly believe that a global public policy institution like the IGF should be funded by 'global' public funds, i.e. UN funds, and should not rely on private funding or even on funding from a few countries, since a considerable number of global IG issues entail geo-political contestations.

We agree with the Under-Secretary General's statement in the opening session that the IGF should not make public policy, but that its activities should feed into legitimate global policy making processes. However, to effectively feed into these processes, the IGF requires significant structural improvements, while keeping within its Tunis mandate.



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We suggest the following improvements in the IGF structure:

1. There should be a clear identification of key issues to be handled in an outcome-oriented way every year. A broader set of issues, however, can continue to be handled in workshops.
2. These key issues should have dedicated working groups that can do intensive preparatory work through the year. We can, for instance, have such groups on child protection and on network neutrality. An IGF inter-sessional can also be held for this purpose.
3. With adequate preparation, including through research and background papers these key issues should be taken up in a focussed manner at the annual IGF meeting.
4. Taking from the IGF meeting, there should be adequate follow up work on these issues.
5. The MAG has to transform from a program committee to a relatively more empowered entity, which can interface with other organizations, and advise as well as make recommendations as per the Tunis mandate, on the basis of the proceedings of the larger IGF. The working and output model of WGIG can be a good example to look at for this purpose.

The suggested improvements will help meeting some important parts of Tunis Agenda for the IGF mandate which remain unmet, for instance, interfacing with appropriate global institutions, and advising as well as making recommendations.

It is timely, as we review the IGF, to explore these necessary structural evolutions in the IGF to address these un-met mandates.